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S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE
PARISH CHURCH OF LANGTON JUXTA PARTNEY,
In the COUNTY of LINCOLN,

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 1800,

BEING THE FIRST DAY APPOINTED FOR A
PUBLIC THANKSGIVING TO ALMIGHTY GOD

FOR
THE PROVIDENTIAL PROTECTION OF THE KING FROM
THE LATE ATROCIOUS ATTEMPT AGAINST HIS
SACRED PERSON.

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A LIST of the Writings on the Hebrew and other Oriental Languages, intended for Publication by the Rev. R. UVEDALE, may be seen in the GENT. MAG. Vol. LXVI. p. 465. Mr. Chancellor CARLYLE, Professor of Arabic, in the University of Cambridge, has examined the Works, and has given them his Testimonial of Approbation.



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I PETER ii. 17.

FEAR GOD—HONOUR THE KING.

THE words of the text require no preface or reference to the context to explain them. In discoursing upon them, I shall, *First*, consider our duty to God: and, *Secondly*, the honour and obedience we owe to Princes.

THE fear of God in the text, implies more immediately a right sense of the Supreme Power that governs the world by his Providence—by whom kings reign, and in whose hand is the heart of kings, to turn them whithersoever he will: and likewise a full purpose and resolution (which cannot but follow from such a sense of him,) to be guided and determined in all our actions by his laws. The wisdom of this fear of God, will become evident to those who are possessed and influenced by it; in making them easy and happy in their

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several circumstances and stations in life; by giving them the blessed fruits of contentment and peace of mind; by alleviating the hardships of adversity, and securing them from the malice and violence of their enemies; and by affording them a firm assurance (if they *should* suffer for the sake of God and a good conscience,) that they shall not be unrewarded at the last: since the Scriptures assure us, that *all things work together for good, to them that fear God.*

As this fear of God is thus highly advantageous to those particular persons who are influenced by it; so is it the best ingredient in human society, to influence it's members to honour and live in due obedience and subjection to the Supreme Magistrate. And this it does by the blessing of God, which always accompanies it; and by the obligation it lays on the consciences of those who are directed by it.

THAT the fear of God, and the duties of religion do even by a natural tendency, promote the obedience of a people, and consequently the welfare of the state, is evident. For as to the moral virtues of honesty, justice and temperance; industry and frugality; these will generally be productive of wealth and plenty; and the Christian graces of humility, charity and patience, do as manifestly contribute to harmony and peace.

THE affairs of the world, when thus circumstanced, proceed in a smooth and even current, and a gale of prosperity fills the sails, whilst those at the helm have little else to do but to command and be obeyed.

STORMS and tempests, dangers and distresses, are the usual produce of vice and irreligion, which will ever occasion

divisions and disturbances in a state. The necessities of many, from their vices and extravagance, the fears and jealousies of more; and the hazard thereby, to which the whole community is exposed; are what generally proceed and give rise to civil quarrels and commotions. They first create uneasiness—then murmurs and clamours—then a desire of change. Whereas the blessing of God, over a nation that lives in the fear of him, shall never be wanting to protect both prince and people, and to preserve them from that worst of plagues, a want of power in the first to command, and a want of will in the other to obey: whence must necessarily ensue the destruction of both.

WITH respect to particular persons—the Providence of God may, indeed, permit even the best of men to be exposed to temporal calamities in this life, and to pass through many tribulations to their final reward in Heaven. And thus, by his will and sufferance, a most righteous magistrate may suffer much temporal evil, and even death itself; if not for his own sins, yet for the sins of his people; since God may have in reserve for him a full recompence for the loss of an earthly kingdom and a transitory life, in a state of glory and immortality. And the wickedness of the wicked, may pass unpunished in this world, because there is another, in which they are to be called to account. But it is not thus that God deals with nations—Since public bodies and communities of men, as such, can only be rewarded or punished in this world. For in the next, all those public societies and political constitutions, whereby men are now linked together, under several governments, shall be dissolved. And, therefore, in the usual course of Providence, religious and virtuous nations are recompensed with temporal blessings and prosperity; and the

crying sins of a people when ripe for destruction, are punished either by the sword of their enemies abroad, or they are given up for a time to their own devices, and thus become instruments of the wrath of God, to ruin and destroy one another.

LET it then be remembered, that the obligations which religion and it's duties lay upon the consciences of men to obedience, is the best foundation of civil government; without which it must be weak and tottering: for it is in vain to be expected, that men should honour their King, who have not learned to fear their God. Human laws, and the terror of those who enforce them, can only bind the outward man, and often ineffectually: but the inward man can be bound only by the obligations of religion, and the fear of him, whom no darkness can blind—no artifice deceive, nor force withstand, and who is able to reward or punish eternally; to recompence with the joys of Heaven, or to destroy both body and soul in Hell. It is the fear of God alone, that can conscientiously engage men to honour and obey their King. This brings me to the other branch of our duty I was to consider; namely, the honour and obedience we owe to Princes.

I SHALL first consider the extent of the duty, and then lay before you, some of those passages of Scripture, by which it is enforced, with the reasons for it.

As to the extent of the duty to honour the King, we are, *first*, to enquire, to whom this honour is to be paid. And, *secondly*, what that honour is.

As to the first; Where the government is such that the Supreme Power is absolutely placed in one person, whether

King, Emperor, or by whatever title he is distinguished, this honour is to be paid to him alone; or to those who are commissioned to act under him; in proportion to that share of rule with which they are entrusted by him.

WHERE the government is still in one individual, but regulated and restrained by acknowledged and established laws—the same honour is still to be paid to him, whilst acting agreeably to the principles of the constitution. Were not this so, there would be but one form of government in the world, and that for the most part tyrannical. For in vain would be the limitation of the executive authority of the Supreme Magistrate by any human laws, if his will alone could disannul them.

IF then it be allowable to restrain Princes by human laws, there must be a power lodged in the hands of some, sufficient to vindicate them from any open and manifest violation, and to protect the rights and privileges of the people, as well as the power and prerogatives of their rulers. But then on the other hand, no pretences of jealousy, no fears or surmises of what may possibly happen, can justify any other restraint, than what the laws require; or the least encroachment on the established prerogative of Majesty: for in such a case, there would never be wanting either factious and turbulent incendiaries, or interested and ambitious hypocrites, to advance and promote such pretences. No person, therefore, acting in a private capacity, can upon any pretence whatever, detract from the honour and authority of the King, without transgressing their duty. Of other forms of government, wherein we are not concerned, I need not speak: but in general, wherever the Supreme Power be lodged, whether in one or many, this

honour should constantly attend it. What this honour is, is the next thing to be explained. And it is in short—that the people should render to those whom Providence has placed over them, all those dues and duties, which the laws of the land reasonably require and command,—such as to have a great respect and reverence for them, which the high station God has placed them in, may justly challenge from us; not on any account, either by open and licentious clamours to revile them, or by secret and artful insinuations, to lessen them in the opinions of others, or to detract from that esteem they have or ought to have for them. All which is comprized in the wise man's direction; *Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.*

It is also required of us, to pray for our civil rulers; as St. Paul exhorts—that supplications and prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings, be made for Kings, and all that are in authority; that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty. Moreover, in order to support their state—maintain their authority and dignity—and to answer the other exigences of government, we are to pay them custom and tribute, according to our Saviour's own command. Above all, we are to live in dutiful obedience and subjection under them. And as this is more especially implied in the honour required of us; I shall for the confirmation of it, lay before you some of those passages in Scripture, wherein both by precept and example, we are instructed so to do.

LET every soul, says St. Paul, be subject to the higher powers—to those who have the supreme power, wherever it be lodged—For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whoever therefore resisteth the

power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and in effect resists God, whose ordinance it is. St. Peter, in the same chapter with the text, is as full to the purpose of obedience to authority, for the sake of God and a good conscience. Submit yourselves, says he, to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; for so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

LET us in the next place hear what examples of obedience the Sacred writers have recorded and proposed to us for our imitation. Out of many, I shall only mention two—The example of David, and of our blessed Saviour.

DAVID—notwithstanding his innocence, his bravery, and his many virtues, by which he had highly merited from his king and country—was notwithstanding with the greatest injustice, pursued by the King, as an enemy, a criminal, and a traitor; yet he turned not again, but only consulted for his own safety. Nor was this for want of power, who had his mortal enemy more than once at his disposal; and was even encouraged by those about him to destroy him.—But God forbid*, says he, that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed—Who can do that and be guiltless? But no example ought to prevail more with Christians, than that of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who though the Son of God, and as such Lord of all things; yet made himself subject to the powers then in being. He yielded obedience to their authority, and paid custom and tribute as he commanded his followers to do. He even submitted to the most

* The Hebrew phrase is, חלילה לי מיהוה *Profanum sit mihi a JEHOVAH.*—The Radix חלל (Arab. حلل) primarily signifies *Solvere*; 2. *Profanare*, i. e. *dissolvere ab omni nexu juris divini.*

unrighteous decrees, though he could have commanded legions of angels to his assistance.

INDEED, whoever considers the end and design of the Christian Religion, the peaceableness of its laws, and the obligations that Christians are under to patience and forbearance, gentleness and meekness, must consider it as inconsistent with such principles, to become factious and turbulent members of the community.

THE doctrine of due submission to legal and constitutional authority is, moreover, most reasonable to be complied with, not only from the obligations of conscience and religion, but from the consideration of its necessity—that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty; and that government, surrounded with many difficulties, may not above all the rest, have the insupportable burden of disobedience in the subject to oppress it. Great, therefore, is the goodness of God, in laying us under such solemn ties of submission to it; if we consider what numbers are to be kept in order, and therefore ought to be kept in awe—that Justice is to be maintained—Virtue encouraged—Religion protected—Industry promoted—the Ambitious curbed—the Violent repressed:—Atheism and Irreligion, Heresy and Scism to be eradicated—Idleness and Villany punished; and what jealousies, fears, murmurs and reproaches, are apt to arise, even under the more laudable management of affairs——Who is sufficient for these things? How wise must be the head—how quick the eye—how honest the heart—how resolute the mind—how firm the nerves; to answer all these ends of good government, without scandal or reproach. Hard would be the fate of the rulers of the people, if a fault or mistake in

them, when occasioned neither by gross corruption, nor manifest imbecility, should be treated with severity; or should the subject be allowed to judge and condemn to the extreme, every thing that should be done amiss. Certain it is, that any government is better than Anarchy and Confusion—than civil Discord and Rebellion—than lawless impunity, where every man may do what is right in his own eyes; or such a wretched and sanguinary scene of misery and confusion, as a neighbouring Nation hath lately presented.

THE great and signal mercy of Almighty God, in the providential protection of the King, from the atrocious and treasonable attempt against his Sacred Person, and for which we are directed by Government to return our united offerings of Praise and Thanksgiving to God, bears testimony in our favour, that even in the midst of a ruinous and destructive War, in which we are unhappily engaged, God has not forgotten to be gracious to this land. Whence we may collect that we have more to fear from the ill principles of the times, and from the impiety in particular which prevails amongst us, than from the atrocious attempts of desperate and bloody-minded men, and the arms of all our enemies, who in open defiance of God and Man, have long been waging war against all Christian Kings and People. And let us remember that there never was an instance of a nation despising God and Religion, who were not despised in their turn, and at length trampled under foot of their enemies. Let us then truly repent of our sins, and return unto the Lord in righteousness, and he will return to us in mercy. Let us make our peace with God, and he will be our shield and salvation.

IN a word, therefore, and to conclude—Are we desirous to live quietly and peaceably, in a flourishing country—under equitable laws, and a good and religious Prince? let us live honestly and charitably with one another—virtuously and religiously in our lives and conversations—in the fear of God—in obedience to the King and Government, and the laws of the land; and then will he, (who is able to do all things for us,) establish peace within our walls, and a continuance of plenty within our borders—make our Jerusalem a praise in the whole Earth, and continue to us the blessings we now enjoy, as long as we shall continue not unworthy of them. Finally then, my brethren, *Honour all Men—Love the Brotherhood—Fear God—Honour the King.*



